

Washington, D.C. - Last night Congresswoman Melissa Bean gave the following statement on the House Floor regarding the Iraq War Resolution, H. Con. Res. 63:

I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 63 and in opposition to the proposed troop surge in Iraq.

When I visited Iraq in 2005, like the soldiers I met there, I was hopeful that democratic elections would allow Iraq to move forward as a unified sovereign nation. While the elections demonstrated a commitment from the Iraqi people to do that, the situation on the ground has instead worsened, sectarian violence has increased – and the escalating death toll for American and Allied troops and the Iraqi people demands serious scrutiny of our strategy in Iraq.

When I met with the President's military and national security advisers last month to learn about their new plan, I anticipated that a new course would be proposed. Regrettably, this surge does not constitute a new course.

We have tried multiple troop surges. After the most recent surge last summer, conducted in Baghdad, the U.S. military declared that it had “not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in levels of violence.” In fact, attacks increased by 22 percent, and already after 20 percent of the current surge has been deployed, violence has not decreased.

Instead of sending more troops, our military mission in Iraq must shift from attempting to secure Iraq to better equipping and training the Iraqi Security Forces so they can secure their own country. Like most Americans, I have supported the President's objective that we will stand down as the Iraqis stand up. We have already trained nearly 325,000 Iraqi Security Forces toward that end.

For 4 years Americans have seen the brave men and women of our Armed Forces perform their duty courageously. We have seen over 3,100 American husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters make the ultimate sacrifice, including 116 servicemen and women from my State of Illinois. We have seen \$400 billion in hard-earned tax dollars invested in this effort to support those fighting. What we haven't seen is real accountability for results.

That is why I have joined my colleagues in the Blue Dog Coalition to introduce the Iraq War Cost Accountability Resolution. This resolution requires accountability in four ways: spending accountability; contractual accountability; budget accountability; and, importantly, Iraqi accountability.

To ensure spending accountability, this resolution requires the Department of Defense Inspector General to provide an accounting of all military and reconstruction spending and to report to Congress every 90 days, including how and where our tax dollars are being spent, transparency in contracting and procurement methods, and levels of participation from other countries, additional funding required, and, importantly, sanctions applied for fraud, abuse, and war

profiteering.

To enforce contractual accountability, a select committee akin to the Truman Committee would be created to investigate the awarding of contracts and their execution to protect our tax dollars. To provide budget accountability, this resolution requires funding requests for the war in Iraq in fiscal 2008 and beyond must come through the regular appropriations process, not continued emergency supplementals. And to demand Iraqi accountability, the administration should firmly condition further American financial and military support upon steady and measurable improvement in Iraqi progress towards principal responsibility for internal security in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, increasing the number of troops without increasing the level of accountability perpetuates the same policy that has led to this crisis in Iraq.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support both of these resolutions. Instead of sending more troops, let us provide the high degree of accountability that the American people demand and that our valiant men and women serving in Iraq deserve.

###